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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 21, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr., to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

DRUG CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, my State of West Virginia is experiencing a crisis. West Virginia is leading the country in a rather grim category: drug overdoses. This issue goes beyond party lines, and it is ripping our State apart.

President Obama is bringing national attention to our drug crisis by coming to my district this afternoon to discuss the prescription drug and heroin epidemic.

The statistics are disturbing. Overdoses in West Virginia increased by 134 percent between 2012 and 2013, which accounts for about 34 drug overdose deaths per 100,000 West Virginia residents. This overdose rate is more than double the national average.

There is no magical solution to this epidemic. We need local, State, and Federal officials to work together to effectively fight back. One of the ways that we can do this is to have the Federal Government support the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program, also known as HIDTA. The HIDTA program provides needed funds to law enforcement to combat drug trafficking while also helping local treatment and prevention efforts.

I have been hosting roundtable discussions across my district to hear directly from communities that are affected by the drug epidemic. I recently held one of these discussions in the town of Romney, West Virginia, in September, to talk about the ongoing issues they face in that community.

Officials at the meeting agreed that we need to utilize all resources available at the local, State, and Federal levels, and we agreed that HIDTA was a key tool in fighting back. It was also pointed out that foster parents are needed to help care for children whose parents are struggling with drug addiction issues.

So you can help, too.

But addressing drug trafficking is not the only thing that needs to be done to help fight the epidemic. We need to help the youngest victims of our shared battle with this crisis: infants who are born addicted.

That is why I cosponsored and voted for H.R. 1462, the Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015, which passed the House unanimously and is awaiting action in the U.S. Senate. This bill addresses a condition called neonatal abstinence syndrome by helping to find the best way to diagnose, evaluate, and

coordinate Federal efforts to help research and respond to this debilitating condition. Infants who suffer from neonatal abstinence syndrome can experience seizures, respiratory impairments, tremors, fever, and difficulty feeding.

Research published by the Journal of Perinatology found that the number of infants suffering from withdrawal grew nearly fivefold from 2000 to 2012. Evidence also shows that an infant is born with drug withdrawal every 25 minutes in the United States.

In West Virginia, it is estimated that, in 1 out of every 13 births, a baby is addicted to drugs. This is a problem that needs serious attention immediately, but this is just one crucial step.

To help fight addiction, one of the latest tools available to the public in West Virginia is a new 24-hour call line that has been launched to help people battling substance and mental health issues in West Virginia.

The call line is 1-844-HELP4WV. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with the promise of never being put on hold. We must continue to work together to fight this epidemic.

LEGALIZING MARIJUANA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, advocates from the new emerging marijuana industry in Oregon are descending on Capitol Hill at a very critical time for this fledgling industry.

They have a report about the implementation of Oregon's Ballot Measure 91—overwhelmingly approved by voters last year—to legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana at the State level. Possession became legal July 1. Retail sales were authorized in existing dispensaries on the 1st of October to significant interest around the State.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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